

GENERAL ORDERS }
 No. 54

HEADQUARTERS
 DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
 WASHINGTON, DC, 1 November 1987

The death of General J. Lawton Collins, former Chief of Staff, United States Army, on 12 September 1987, in Washington, DC, is announced with deep regret.

General Collins was an officer of the highest ideals. His courage, sound judgment, and superb leadership produced brilliant military achievements of the greatest value to his country. With his passing the nation has lost a faithful, valiant servant and the United States Army a commander of great stature.

General J. Lawton Collins was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, on May 1, 1896. He graduated from the United States Military Academy and was commissioned a second lieutenant of Infantry on 20 April 1917. He advanced through the grades with appointment to General on 24 January 1948.

General Collins graduated from the Company Officers' Course, The Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia, in June 1926; the Advanced Course, The Field Artillery School, Fort Sill, Oklahoma, in June 1927; the Command and General Staff School, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, in June 1933; the Army Industrial College, Washington, DC, in August 1937; and the Army War College, Fort Humphreys, DC, in June 1938.

General Collins' service included assignments with the 22d Infantry from April 1917 to May 1919 at various locations in the United States, beginning as a company commander and culminating as Commander, 3d Battalion. In June 1919, General Collins was transferred to Europe, serving successively as a battalion commander in the 18th Infantry; in command assignments with the 8th Infantry; and as an Assistant to the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3 (Plans, Training, and Operations), then Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan M. Wainwright, at the headquarters of the American Forces in Germany serving in that capacity until returning to the United States in July 1921.

For the next four years General Collins served as an instructor in chemistry and electricity at the United States Military Academy. In July 1927, he became an instructor in weapons and later tactics at The Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia, under Generals Marshall and "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell. General Collins was transferred to the Philippine Islands in August 1933 for duty with the 23d Brigade (Philippine Scouts) at Fort William McKinley, and later became Assistant Chief of Staff for Military Intelligence and for Plans and Training of the Philippine Division. In June 1936, General Collins enrolled in the Army Industrial College and graduated in the spring of 1938. The next year he attended the Army War College, and after graduation he was assigned as an instructor

GO 54

until June 1940. Subsequently, he assumed additional duties in the Office of the Secretary, War Department General Staff. In January 1941, he was assigned as Chief of Staff of the VII Corps, Fort McClellan, Alabama.

At the outbreak of World War II, General Collins was designated Chief of Staff, Hawaiian Department, where he assisted in the reorganization of the defense of the Hawaiian Islands. In May 1942, he became Commanding General of the 25th Infantry Division. In December 1942, he took the 25th Infantry Division into Guadalcanal in relief of the First Marine Division. In December 1943, he was transferred to the European Theater where, in February 1944, he was assigned as Commanding General, VII Corps, in England. He commanded the Corps through some of the fiercest combat that occurred in World War II, including action in the D-Day landing in Normandy, in the capture of Cherbourg, the breakout from Normandy, the great defensive battle at Mortain, and the drive of the United States First Army across Europe to a meeting with the Russians on the Elbe River 50 miles from Berlin.

In August 1945, after the VII Corps returned to the United States, General Collins was appointed Chief of Staff, Army Ground Forces, Washington, DC, under General Jacob L. Devers. He held this position until December 1945, when he was assigned as Director of Information, Office of the Chief of Staff. On 29 July 1947, he was named Deputy Chief of Staff, United States Army, and Vice Chief of Staff, United States Army, until becoming the Chief of Staff on 16 August 1949. General Collins was Chief of Staff, United States Army until 15 August 1953. President Eisenhower then appointed him as the United States Representative to the Military Committee and the Standing Group of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. On 3 November 1954, General Collins was appointed as a Special Representative of the United States to Vietnam, with the personal rank of Ambassador. He remained in Vietnam until May 1955 when he returned to his assignment with NATO. He served in the latter capacity until his retirement from active service on 31 March 1956. In 1984, General Collins served as the personal representative of President Reagan at the ceremonies in Normandy commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Allied landings.

For his extraordinarily meritorious and distinguished service, General Collins was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal (with three Oak Leaf Clusters); the Silver Star Medal (with Oak Leaf Cluster); the Legion of Merit (with two Oak Leaf Clusters, and a Gold Star with Combat "V", United States Navy, in lieu of a third Legion of Merit); and the Bronze Star Medal. His service medals included: the World War I Victory Medal; the Army of Occupation of Germany Medal (World War I); the American Defense Service Medal; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal (with three Bronze Service Stars); the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal (with Arrowhead and five Bronze Stars); the World War II Victory Medal; the Army of Occupation Medal

(Germany-World War II); and the National Defense Service Medal. His foreign decorations included the Legion of Honor, Rank of Officer and Croix de Guerre with Palm (French); the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Companion of the Bath (Military Division) (Great Britain); the Order of Suvorov, Second Class (two awards) (Soviet Union); the Order of Leopold II with Palm, Degree of Grand Officer and Croix de Guerre with Palm (Belgium); the Order of General San Martin, Degree of Grand Official (Argentina); the Order of Military Merit, Degree of Grand Officer (Brazil); the Order of George I, Degree of Grand Cross (Greece); the Order of Homayoun, First Class (Iran); the Order of Boyaca, Degree of Grand Officer (Columbia); the Medal of Military Merit, First Class (Chile); the Order of Military Merit (Cuba); the Taeguk Distinguished Military Service Medal with Gold Star (South Korea); and the Order of Military Merit, First Class (Mexico).

General Collins was also awarded the first Eisenhower Liberation Medal in 1986 from Elie Weisel and the Committee on the Holocaust for his liberation of slave labor camps in Germany as the First Army moved toward Berlin.

General Collins' life was characterized by integrity, courage, dedication and patriotism. These qualities earned him the respect and admiration of all who knew him. The grief caused by the death of General Collins is deeply shared by all members of the United States Army.

General Collins is survived by his wife, Mrs. Gladys Easterbrook Collins; a son, retired Army Colonel Joseph E. Collins of Lewiston, Idaho; two daughters, Gladys Stenger of Potomac, and Nancy Rubino of Bethesda, Maryland; and seventeen grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

CARL E. VUONO
General, United States Army
Chief of Staff

Official:

R. L. DILWORTH
Brigadier General, United States Army
The Adjutant General

DISTRIBUTION:

Active Army, USAR, ARNG: To be distributed in accordance with DA Form 12-4, requirements for Department of the Army General Orders.